Amendments to the Claims

The current listing of the claims replaces all previous amendments and listings of the claims.

1.-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) An image formation system having a link copy mode in which, of a plurality of image formation apparatuses connected to each other for enabling data communications, an image formation apparatus functioning as a master machine reads an image of a document to be copied, the read image is transferred to at least one other image formation apparatus functioning as a slave machine, and printing of the read image is shared by said master machine and said slave machine,

wherein said slave machine is configured to report functions available in said slave machine to said master machine ~~based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine~~, and said master machine is configured to inhibit operation in the link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected, the unusable function being a function which either the master machine or the slave machine is unable to execute ~~based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine~~.

8. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 7, wherein the functions comprise a staple function.

9. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 7, wherein said master machine is connected to the slave machine peer to peer.

10. (Currently Amended) An image formation apparatus connected to at least one other image formation apparatus such that data communications can be executed between the image formation apparatuses, said image formation apparatus comprising:

a reading unit configured to read an image of a document;

a printing unit configured to print the read image of the document;

a display unit configured to display keys to select a function; and

a controller configured to execute a link copy mode in which the read image is

transferred to said other image formation apparatus to share printing of the read image with

the image formation apparatus and said other image formation apparatus,

wherein the image forming apparatus is configured to not display in a link copy mode

a key to permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the link copy

mode has been selected, the unusable function being a function which either the image

formation apparatus or the other image formation apparatus is unable to execute ~~when the~~

~~image forming apparatus does not receive a signal indicating that a finisher is connected to~~

~~the other image forming apparatus~~.

11. (Previously Presented) The image formation apparatus according to the claim 10,

wherein the function comprises a staple function.

12. (Original) The image formation apparatus according to the claim 10, wherein

said image formation apparatus is connected to said other image formation apparatus peer to

peer.

13. (Currently Amended) An image formation system having a link copy mode in

which, of a plurality of image formation apparatuses connected to each other for enabling

data communications, an image formation apparatus functioning as a master machine reads

an image of a document to be copied, the read image is transferred to at least one other image

formation apparatus functioning as a slave machine, and printing of the read image is shared

by said master machine and said slave machine,

wherein said slave machine is configured to report functions available in said slave

machine to said master machine ~~based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave~~

~~machine~~, and said master machine is configured to not display in a link copy mode a key to

permit selection of an unusable function in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has

been selected, the unusable function being a function which either the master machine or the

slave machine is unable to execute ~~based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave~~

~~machine~~.

14. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 13,

wherein the functions comprise a staple function.

15. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 13,

wherein said master machine is connected to the slave machine peer to peer.

16.-21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) An image formation apparatus connected to at least one

other image formation apparatus such that data communications can be executed between the

image formation apparatuses, said image formation apparatus comprising:

a reading unit configured to read an image of a document;

a printing unit configured to print the read image of the document; and

a controller configured to execute a link copy mode in which the read image is

transferred to said other image formation apparatus to share printing of the read image with

the image formation apparatus and said other image formation apparatus,

wherein the image forming apparatus is configured to cancel in a link copy mode a

mode to permit execution of an unusable function in said image formation apparatus or said

other image formation apparatus when the mode is selected in the link copy mode after the

link copy mode has been selected in said image formation apparatus or said other image

formation apparatus, the unusable function being a function which either the image formation

apparatus or the other image formation apparatus is unable to execute ~~when the image~~

~~forming apparatus does not receive a signal indicating that a finisher is connected to the other~~

~~image forming apparatus~~.

23. (Previously Presented) The image formation apparatus according to the claim 22, wherein the function comprises a staple function.

24. (Original) The image formation apparatus according to the claim 22, wherein said image formation apparatus is connected to said other image formation apparatus peer to peer.

25. (Currently Amended) An image formation system having a link copy mode in which, of a plurality of image formation apparatuses connected to each other for enabling data communications, an image formation apparatus functioning as a master machine reads an image of a document to be copied, the read image is transferred to at least one other image formation apparatus functioning as a slave machine, and printing of the read image is shared by said master machine and said slave machine,

wherein said slave machine is configured to report functions available in said slave machine to said master machine ~~based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine~~, and said master machine is configured to cancel a mode to permit execution of an unusable function in said master machine or said slave machine when the mode is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected in said master machine or said slave machine, the unusable function being a function which either the master machine or the slave machine is unable to execute ~~based on a lack of a connection of the finisher and the slave machine~~.

26. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 25, wherein the function comprises a staple function.

27. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 25, wherein said master machine is connected to the slave machine peer to peer.

28.-33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) An image formation apparatus connected to at least one other image formation apparatus such that data communications can be executed between the two image formation apparatuses, said image formation apparatus comprising:

a reading unit configured to read an image of a document;

a printing unit configured to print the read image of the document; and

a controller configured to execute a link copy mode in which the read image is transferred to said other image formation apparatus to share printing of the read image with the image formation apparatus and said other image formation apparatus,

wherein the image forming apparatus is configured to inhibit operation in the link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and said other image formation apparatus is not in a state where data communications can be executed, the unusable function being a function which either the image formation apparatus or the other image formation apparatus is unable to execute ~~when the image forming apparatus does not receive a signal that a finisher is connected to the other image forming apparatus~~.

35. (Original) The image formation apparatus according to the claim 34, wherein said image formation apparatus is connected to said other image formation apparatus peer to peer.

36. (Currently Amended) An image formation apparatus connected to at least one other image formation apparatus such that data communications can be executed between the two image formation apparatuses, said image formation apparatus comprising:

a reading unit configured to read an image of a document;

a printing unit configured to print the image; and

a reporting unit configured to report to said other image formation apparatus whether data communications can be executed from the image formation apparatus to said other image formation apparatus,

wherein an image of a document read by and transferred from said other image formation apparatus is printed in said local image formation apparatus, and

wherein the image forming apparatus is configured to inhibit operation in a link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected, the unusable function being a function which either the image formation apparatus or the other image formation apparatus is unable to execute ~~when the image forming apparatus does not receive a signal that a finisher is connected to the other image forming apparatus~~.

37. (Original) The image formation apparatus according to the claim 36, wherein said image formation apparatus is connected to said other image formation apparatus peer to peer.

38. (Currently Amended) An image formation system having a link copy mode in which, of a plurality of image formation apparatuses connected to each other for enabling data communications, an image formation apparatus functioning as a master machine reads an image of a document to be copied, the read image is transferred to at least one other image formation apparatus functioning as a slave machine, and printing of the read image is shared by said master machine and said slave machine,

wherein said slave machine is configured to report to said master machine whether data communications can be executed from said slave machine to said master machine ~~based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine~~, and said master machine is configured to inhibit an operation in the link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and said slave

machine is not in data communications executable state, the unusable function being a function which either the master machine or the slave machine is unable to execute ~~based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine~~.

39. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 38, wherein said slave machine is configured to periodically transmit a communication connection confirmation signal to indicate whether connection has been established to said master machine, and said master machine is configured to receive the communication connection confirmation signal and to determine whether said slave machine is ready for communication.

40. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 38, wherein said master machine is connected to the slave machine peer to peer.

41.-52. (Canceled)

53. (Currently Amended) An image formation system having a link copy mode in which, of a plurality of image formation apparatuses connected to each other for enabling data communications, an image formation apparatus functioning as a master machine reads an image of a document to be copied, the read image is transferred to at least one other image formation apparatus functioning as a slave machine, and printing of the read image is shared by said master machine and said slave machine,

wherein said slave machine is configured to report to said master machine whether data communications can be executed from said slave machine to said master machine ~~based on a connection state of a finisher to the slave machine~~, and said master machine is configured to inhibit operation in the link copy mode when an unusable function is selected in the link copy mode after the link copy mode has been selected and when said slave machine is not in a state where data communication can be executed, the unusable function

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being a function which either the master machine or the slave machine is unable to execute

~~based on a lack of a connection of the finisher to the slave machine~~.

54.. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 53, wherein said slave machine is configured to periodically transmit a communication connection confirmation signal to indicate whether connection has been established to said master machine, and said master machine is configured to receive the communication connection confirmation signal and to determine whether said slave machine is ready for communication.

55. (Previously Presented) The image formation system according to the claim 53, wherein said master machine is connected to the slave machine peer to peer.

56.-140. (Canceled)